

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

16 July 2019

Mr. David Lindsey
MuckRock News
DEPT MR 59744
411A Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

Reference: F-2018-02409

Dear Mr. Lindsey:

This is a final response to your 21 August 2018 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for **all reports, memoranda, or other analyses prepared by the DCI Red Cell on the subject of Iraq between 1 October 2002 and 1 April 2003**. We processed your request in accordance with the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended, and the CIA Information Act, 50 U.S.C. § 3141, as amended.

We completed a thorough search for records responsive to your request and located the enclosed 14 documents, consisting of 43 pages, which we can release in segregable form with deletions made on the basis of FOIA exemptions (b)(1) and/or (b)(3). Copies of the documents and an explanation of exemptions are enclosed.

Additional material was determined to be currently and properly classified and must be denied in its entirety on the basis of FOIA exemptions (b)(1) and (b)(3). Exemption (b)(3) pertains to information exempt from disclosure by statute. The relevant statutes are Section 6 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, as amended, and Section 102A(i)(1) of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended.

As the CIA Information and Privacy Coordinator, I am the CIA official responsible for this determination. You have the right to appeal this response to the Agency Release Panel, in my care, within 90 days from the date of this letter. Please include the basis of your appeal.

If you have any questions regarding our response, you may contact us at:

Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505
Information and Privacy Coordinator
703-613-3007 (Fax)

Please be advised that you may seek dispute resolution services from the CIA's FOIA Public Liaison or from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) of the National Archives and Records Administration. OGIS offers mediation services to help resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies. You may reach CIA's FOIA Public Liaison at:

703-613-1287 (FOIA Hotline)

The contact information for OGIS is:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road – OGIS
College Park, MD 20740-6001
202-741-5770
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202-741-5769 (fax)
ogis@nara.gov

Contacting the CIA's FOIA Public Liaison or OGIS does not affect your right to pursue an administrative appeal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Lilly', is positioned above the printed name.

Mark Lilly
Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures

Explanation of Exemptions Under the Freedom of Information Act

- (b)(1) exempts from disclosure information currently and properly classified, pursuant to an Executive Order;
- (b)(2) exempts from disclosure information which pertains solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of the Agency;
- (b)(3) exempts from disclosure information that another federal statute protects, provided that the other federal statute either requires that the matters be withheld, or establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld. The (b)(3) statutes upon which the CIA relies include, but are not limited to, the CIA Act of 1949.
- (b)(4) exempts from disclosure trade secrets and commercial or financial information that is obtained from a person and that is privileged or confidential;
- (b)(5) exempts from disclosure inter-and intra-agency memoranda or letters that would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency;
- (b)(6) exempts from disclosure information from personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy;
- (b)(7) exempts from disclosure information compiled for law enforcement purposes to the extent that the production of the information (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings; (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication; (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy; (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source or, in the case of information compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation or by an agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source ; (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law; or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger any individual's life or physical safety;
- (b)(8) exempts from disclosure information contained in reports or related to examination, operating, or condition reports prepared by, or on behalf of, or for use of an agency responsible for regulating or supervising financial institutions; and
- (b)(9) exempts from disclosure geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

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PHONE NUMBER: 482-4080

SUBJECT: RED CELL

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PAGES: 4
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Director of Central Intelligence

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DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Report

Number 89

26 October 2002

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments to the DCI Red Cell at [redacted]

Could Saddam Step Down as a Ploy to Delay US Action? (S//REL)

In a last ditch effort to disrupt US plans, Saddam might resign as Iraq's President and pass the mantle to a puppet, perhaps his younger son Qusay but possibly a stooge he thinks the international community may find less malodorous. Saddam might calculate a sudden, well-timed resignation—although deceiving no one about who calls the shots in Iraq—could throw the US off stride and postpone an invasion as UN members demand an assessment of the "new" situation and support for military action erodes. If a resignation ploy had little effect, Saddam could easily orchestrate his recall to power "by the Iraqi people" and use his gesture to stoke Arab resistance to the US.

Saddam realizes that if the US invades Iraq, he will lose power and probably his life. Based on his past behavior, Saddam surely has some surprises up his sleeve. The Red Cell consulted CIA analysts and speculates on an eleventh hour gambit Saddam might use to thwart an invasion: [redacted]

Standing Down to Upstage Washington [redacted]

Saddam relishes power and will do virtually anything to retain it. His foes are therefore prudent to prepare for the unthinkable—steps even Saddam might see as anathema until he sees the end approaching. For example, a sham resignation in which Saddam ruled from behind the scenes would be far preferable to him than exile abroad, but he might fear losing control, especially of the security forces. He would be mindful of Milosevic's fate, perhaps calculating a successor would eventually turn him over to the War Crimes Tribunal.

- Moreover, Saddam's personality is ill suited to stepping aside. He reacted negatively when a diplomat raised with him the possibility of exile, reflecting his determination to hang on to power even if offered personal security [redacted]

Nevertheless, in the face of overwhelming US and coalition force, Saddam may come to see a resignation gambit as offering the best hope for personal survival and the only way to preserve his influence. Compared to death at US hands or foreign exile, voluntary resignation might strike him as a way retain control through a hand-picked successor while posturing as elder statesman, sacrificing position for the good of Iraqi and Arab peoples.

- Saddam has already played the puppet master. Before he became president in 1979, he exercised near absolute power from behind the throne as Iraq's number two leader. [redacted]

What He Might Hope To Gain [redacted]

If an attack against Iraq seemed inevitable, Saddam might calculate that a last minute resignation would at least buy him additional time while the world puzzled over the significance of such a move. If key actors played their parts adroitly, Saddam might hope

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to break up any existing coalition while denying the US the objective of regime change. In a best case for him, Saddam might even be able to resume formal power at the "behest of the Iraqi people" when the heat eventually subsided.

- Even if the US refused to bite and moved ahead with invasion plans, Saddam would probably calculate—correctly, in our view—that other states would pressure Washington to pause and let the UN try to deal with the "new" regime.

(b)(1)

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- Neighboring Arab leaders might even praise Saddam's statesman-like move to avert a potential crisis for them in dealing with the Arab "street"—especially if Saddam claimed his departure would allow the world to focus on the "real" issue of Israeli aggression against the Palestinians.

- A Saddam resignation would also throw the already fractious Iraq opposition off balance and cause a scramble for influence inside and outside Iraq. Despite suspicions of what Saddam was really up to, Kurds and Shia opposition elements might approach a new Iraqi leader to cut a deal.

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A resignation might enhance Saddam's policy of trying to appear forthcoming on UN inspections. Saddam could calculate a figurehead would be even more effective in selling the notion that Iraq had nothing to hide. With several years to conceal its programs and remove evidence from suspect facilities, the regime stands an excellent chance of fooling UNMOVIC and creating pressure in the UNSC to dismantle the sanctions regime.

- With inspectors back in Iraq and Saddam on the sidelines, international support for a hard line would erode. Over time, a "new" Iraqi regime could resume its efforts to develop WMD.

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Qualified Candidates for Front Man (S//REL)

To undertake a faux resignation, Saddam would need a "successor" strongly committed to Saddam's personal safety and the interest of the family and broader Tikrit clan. The new president would need to be willing to serve as a facade behind which Saddam would rule and to resist efforts to transform the system or marginalize the Ba'th party. A Saddam surrogate would also need credibility with the security services and the Revolutionary Guard and have a measure of international standing, especially among Arabs states.

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With these considerations in mind, Saddam might go one of three ways:

- **Dynastic.** Saddam's preferred successor is his younger son, Qusay, whom he has been grooming for power. Qusay has close ties to the security organizations and the Ba'th party. He would protect family and clan interests. He is steeped in the Arab tradition of deference to parental authority and has less incentive than other potential successors to betray Saddam's trust, as long as he remained comfortable in an ersatz role. Qusay would be seen as identical to Saddam, however, with almost no fig leaf to cover Saddam's continuing power.
- **Constitutional.** According to the interim 1970 Constitution as revised, the Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, Izzat al-Duri, should be Saddam's

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successor. Al-Duri is a loyal Saddam henchman, having survived in the position since 1979. His poor health and lack of charisma suggest he would not be a threat to Saddam. He is, however, a sleazy figure tainted by involvement in WMD and would be a poor "face" to the outside world.

- **Pragmatic.** Saddam might turn to Deputy Premier Tariq Aziz if he thought someone with greater standing in the outside world would complete the ruse. Aziz is well known abroad, having dealt with Western and Arab leaders for years, and is seen as a relative moderate. As a Christian of some urbanity, Aziz might be the sort of benign face that can help make Saddam's strategy of tactical retreat work. His lack of a power base and age (72) would make him easy to manipulate. [REDACTED] (b)(3)

How It Could Happen [REDACTED] (b)(3)

If he decided to resign at the eleventh hour, Saddam would in all likelihood make a major speech, perhaps to a Ba'hist concave, explaining that he was stepping down to save his countrymen and to promote Arab interests. He might blame the US, with its imperialist ambitions and Zionist string-pullers, noting that efforts to oust him violated the collective will of the Iraq people expressed in his "unanimous" reelection in October. He would make a plea to the Arab world to no longer let a "false" confrontation with him deflect from resistance to US and Israeli aggression. [REDACTED] (b)(3)

Saddam would avoid touching—much less playing—the resignation card until he was convinced he had no other alternative. In 1991, he offered to withdraw from Kuwait only when major coalition military movements were underway, but by then the coalition saw Saddam's offer as a transparent stalling tactic. This time, support for moving against Saddam is much softer and a late surprise might find greater receptivity. (S//REL)

If Saddam plays this "low probability, high impact" gambit, we might see some indicators.

- On the eve of a resignation Saddam might purge of officials of questionable loyalty lest anyone suspect he is going soft.
- Saddam and the Iraqi media might increasingly portray the struggle with the US exclusively as a personal vendetta against Saddam, helping pave the way for an accommodation with the new leader.
- Saddam might consult with his sons, al-Duri, and some Ba'ath Party leaders. We might detect such efforts to script a resignation. [REDACTED] (b)(3)

If a staged resignation appeared unlikely to delay US military action, Saddam could quickly reassume the reins. He would swing the Iraqi propaganda apparatus into action behind a "grass roots" recall to power. The media would stress that Saddam, in a last attempt to avert conflict and protect the Iraqi people, had been willing to step aside, but that even this "magnanimous" gesture would not satisfy the "rapacious" US administration and its allies, the Israelis and anti-Islamic Arab "lackeys."

- Such themes would resonate in the Middle East and could activate the Arab "street" to violent protest against any support provided to US forces. [REDACTED] (b)(3)

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Director of Central Intelligence

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DCI Red Cell

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A Red Cell Report

Number 85

1 October 2002

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments to the DCI Red Cell at [redacted]

Greasing Iraq's Political Transformation With Oil Money [redacted]

The quicker and more decisive a military victory in Iraq, the more likely large parts of the Saddam-era elite will remain in power—especially if elites help oust Saddam and expect a key role in the new order. A post-Saddam petroleum board under US-UK oversight that uses Iraq's oil money to build up stakeholders in a new political order might reduce the residual power of old elites, stabilize relations between post-war factions, and buy time for new leaders to emerge. Because the nexus between oil and political power is intuitive to Gulf leaders, reorganizing Iraqi politics based on creative revenue distribution schemes might defuse concerns about what US-sponsored change in Iraq means elsewhere in the region.

The Red Cell speculated on post-Saddam political options and prospects for democratic transition in an Iraq that has had no experience of popular government.

Quick Victory Means Intact Elites [redacted]

Iraq's history has been marred by deep differences among its elite Sunni groups. In our reading, the country has never developed a sense of nationhood that transcends key families and tribes. Iraq has maintained its unity only by autocratic leadership.

- Iraq is bereft of political traditions like Afghanistan's Loya Jirga that might provide an indigenous basis for democracy. And Saddam's active cultivation of anti-Americanism mixed with Iraqis' traditional abhorrence of foreign domination—probably the most potent unifying force in Iraq's history—poses a stubborn legacy, even if the overthrow of Saddam himself is welcome.
- Exile organizations such as the Iraqi National Congress (INC) have little legitimacy inside Iraq, where few are likely to accept the INC in leading roles unless imposed by allied arms.

The quicker a military victory over Saddam, the more likely the Sunni elites that play a leading role under Saddam would remain in place, expecting to figure prominently in a new order—particularly if they desert Saddam at the right time. Although the Sunni elites have the expertise needed to keep the country running, most are also members of Saddam's hated Ba'th Party. A longer, more destructive struggle would bring Iraq closer to a clean sweep of the slate that would approximate Germany's "year zero" in 1945.

- An Iraqi general might present the US and allies with a real dilemma by simply following the precedents of Iraqi history, knocking off Saddam, and declaring himself leader, backed by undamaged military units. Such a move would give the international community the satisfaction of a Saddam-free Iraq willing to surrender its WMD but otherwise preserving Iraq's authoritarian regime.

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After decades of repression and exclusion from power by successive Sunni Arab governments, Iraq's other ethnic and religious groupings will be loath to reconcile with a regime identical to its predecessor except for the dictator's absence.

- In the north, the Kurds have their own political institutions—two competing sets, in fact—developed under the protection of US and UK air power. The Kurds are much better prepared than other groups for immediately assuming a post-Saddam political-military role. Anxious to press their political aspirations, they may act on a long-held desire for independence despite the risk of armed Turkish intervention. The Kurds also pose a threat to seize the rich oilfields immediately to their south.

- A majority of Iraq's population, the Shia of the south have long been suppressed and are poorly organized to press their interests—a managerial gap Iranian hardliners might be glad to fill as Saddam's grip is loosened. Longtime Shia resentment of their shabby treatment by Baghdad—as well as by foreign oppressors—might result in violence, as was the case in 1991 when Saddam was vulnerable. To stave off trouble, Saddam has relied more on tribal sheiks in Shia areas, which might provide a basis for a Shia political role post-Saddam.

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Oil Revenue as Agent of Political Change

(b)(3)

Using Iraq's oil wealth to facilitate a new political order may be a practicable way of easing potential post-Saddam frictions. By tapping Iraq's oil money and giving key groups a stake in how the revenues are used, the US and its partners might provide a major incentive for cooperation among Iraq's competing players while, for a time, keeping decisive influence in their own hands.

- Oil money is a traditional tool of control in the region and has provided a basis for political legitimacy in Iraq and other oil rich states. Indeed, Iraq's oil wealth has been one of its few sources of national identity.
- Although the danger exists that Saddam might try to destroy Iraq's oil production capabilities, we believe that as Saddam's demise appears imminent the odds will increase that many technocrats would refuse to destroy their national treasure—just as Speer and others refused to obey Hitler's "scorched earth" orders in 1945. Visible steps to protect the oilfields—either with military forces or a clear message to the workforce of rewards for those who hold their posts and punishment for those who destroy facilities—might reduce the risk.

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After Saddam's ouster, the creation of a "petroleum board" consisting of key Iraqi political groups may be a way to help dilute the authority of any one group (especially remnants of Saddam's regime who help the US and its partners during the war), promote political cohesion, and lay the groundwork for democratic development. Rather than turning the revenues over to a new regime or having them directly managed by foreigners, key post-Saddam groups could be given a stake in dealing with resource sharing and the compromises needed to make it work.

- In the post-Saddam era, without clandestine weapons programs and the dictator's household expenses, Iraq will probably have more oil revenue available for the needs of its populace. If Iraq's oil facilities remain intact, production might approach double the current level. Income would receive another boost from eliminating discounts on Iraqi oil sold in violation of sanctions.

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To complement an oil board that reaches out to key post-Saddam figures, states with financial and political interests in Iraq might be receptive to a UN-sponsored "Iraq Advisory Commission" designed to link favorable domestic political change to the interests of important outsiders. Such a Commission might be made up of states already on the ground with military forces as well as others—perhaps including Iran, Russia, and Turkey—that contributed to Saddam's deposal and hold special equities in any succession arrangements.

- An "Iraq Advisory Commission" might also link allocation of oil revenue to the repayment of Iraq's foreign debts, which might speak to Russian and French calculations about how far to support the policy of regime change.

(b)(3)

In our reading of Iraq's likely post-Saddam environment, institutions like a "petroleum board" and an "advisory commission" offer several potential advantages:

- The key political players in Iraq would need to cooperate to get their share of oil revenues. This would provide tangible economic incentives for cooperation and for developing processes of political bargaining and compromise.
- As the petroleum board helped restore order to Iraq's economic house, a measure of "breathing space" for building a new political order would result. Indeed, given the lack of institutions and traditions to build on—other than those closely associated with Saddam or the Kurds—a political process linked to oil revenues might buy the time for new political groupings and personalities to emerge.
- A political transition based on bargaining over oil revenues would, on the surface, look familiar to Gulf states and may be more likely to win acceptance by reducing perceptions that the US will impose a new political order. While US-UK predominance in an oil board would be expected, transparency in dealings would show both Washington and London to be "honest brokers" among post-Saddam Iraqi groups. This may allay concerns in the region and elsewhere that the real US goal is Iraq's oil wealth.

(b)(3)

Such a scheme has associated risks, as would be the case with the creation of any institution and its resulting politics. Indeed, post-Saddam politics could be defined as opposition to foreign-dominated institutions such as an oil board, much as late 19th century Muslim critics defined nationalist politics by opposition to the European-dominated debt commissions that controlled Egypt and the Ottoman Empire and that were seen as serving the interests of foreigners.

- In other states, oil boards have become corrupt and liable to be viewed as serving narrow political interests. To the extent an oil board is perceived as creating economic—and political—winners and losers, a dangerous "zero-sum" mentality might emerge and play to old Iraqi suspicions. That said, as long as such debates transpire in an open environment guaranteed by the US and its partners, a healthy learning process might result.

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Special Memorandum

2 November 2002

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments to the DCI Red Cell at [redacted]

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Turning Saddam's Core Personality Traits Against Him [redacted]

(b)(3)

Saddam Hussein's strong conviction about the absolute correctness of his own opinions makes him vulnerable to deception operations. Similarly, Saddam's overconfidence in his singular ability to manage crises might lead to misjudgments and exploitable rashness, particularly if Saddam perceives his control of people and events to be slipping. The dictator's ruthless readiness to suppress internal challenges could be pricked to induce repressive steps that roil his inner circle and build international support for US intervention. And the Iraqi strongman's presumption that "everyone is willing to cut a deal" might lull him into a false sense of longevity and into delaying countermeasures against US military moves until it is too late. [redacted]

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[redacted] the Red Cell was asked to consider how to turn those characteristics to US advantage. [redacted]

(b)(3)

Exploiting Saddam's Self-Image [redacted]

(b)(3)

Saddam is a resourceful thug who has nearly perfected the art of dictatorial rule. Successful application of calculated ruthlessness and a wanton disregard for anything other than himself effectively shields him from potential foes.

(b)(3)

- Opportunities nevertheless abound to turn his supposed strengths against him. [redacted] Saddam-watchers have identified key attributes that serve his insatiable appetite for power but that may work against him in wartime. [redacted]

(b)(1)

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Conviction about the correctness of his own opinions, intimidation of subordinates who disagree, and unwillingness to listen to bad news or contrary views leaves Saddam vulnerable to deception operations. If facts on the ground conflict with his strongly held notions, he could be led to reject the facts, to his own detriment.

- The dogmatic convictions of Hitler about where D-Day would come and of Stalin in rejecting warnings of a German invasion are cases in point. Few Iraqi subordinates are willing to say, "No, Saddam, you are wrong," especially if they believe his mind is set. And Saddam may reject the views of those few who dare suggest alternatives.

- Saddam's propensity to operate inside the box of his own infallibility might be enhanced by disinformation or disruption operations directed at communications between Saddam and his key commands. With little, or confusing, information coming in, Saddam is even more likely to act on "what I alone know is true." [redacted]

(b)(3)

Arrogance about his ability to manage crises and "come out on top" could lead to misjudgments if Saddam sees his control of people and events slipping. Belated realization that things are not going his way, either diplomatically as war looms or on the battlefield once the shooting starts, could set off an escalatory cycle of anger, impulsiveness, and poorly hatched decisions undermining Iraq's warfighting capabilities.

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- US-led or orchestrated actions that undermined Saddam's control would exploit this vulnerability. Saddam might be especially inclined to overreact if he thought his own clans or broader elements of the Sunni elite were abandoning him, or if hated foes—Kurds, Shi'a, or Iranians—were leading a rebellious charge or otherwise diluting his ability to manage a wartime crisis.

(b)(3)

A ruthless willingness to suppress internal challenges to his rule is an integral part of Saddam's confidence that he can master any crisis; pricking this sensitivity might induce new repressive actions that further divide Iraqis and justify US intervention. Selected operations "proving" that Saddam's hold is weakening might enrage the dictator and push him into exploitable blunders, including diversion of elite troops to supposedly troubled locales and away from more critical US wartime targets.

- If Saddam thought major Shi'a or Kurdish moves against him were in the offing despite his increased efforts to deter them, he might move him to suppress them preemptively, which would strengthen the case for prompt US intervention on humanitarian grounds. Saddam might reject the lure and contain his instincts, allowing opposition groups to gain important ground. Saddam, in his infallible wisdom, might also be convinced of "a deal" between Iran, the US, and the Shi'a and fall into mistakes.
- Credible indications of plots against the Iraqi dictator from within the regime might incite purges and push a worried crony to get Saddam before Saddam gets him. For example, the rivalry between Saddam's sons, Qusay and Uday, opens the door to stories designed to sow distrust between the sons and between father and sons. Or noticeably dropping Tariq Aziz or other prominent leaders from the published list of potential war criminals—perhaps following a foreign trip—might lead Saddam to infer collaboration with the US.
- Saddam is mindful of the fate of Romania's Ceaucescu and Serbia's Milosevic—one murdered by the mob, the other turned over to a war crimes tribunal. Information warfare claiming that fissures inside Iraq will lead Saddam to such an end might induce paranoid mistakes and miscalculations.

(b)(3)

The Iraqi strongman's belief that, at the end of the day, everyone is willing to cut a deal might lull him into a false sense that, even as fighting begins, he can put something together with Washington. This sense might lead to delays in critical decisions or "too little, too late" responses to US military moves. Thinking he is supremely able to navigate a world of options—even war leaves some options open—might induce him to delay military or terrorist strikes until US countermeasures are ready.

- For example, Saddam might believe whispered messages from Russia or Syria indicating a US willingness to cut a deal on inspections rather than risk a war without sufficient UNSC support, or to let Saddam survive a war as long as he does not use WMD against the US.
- Saddam might even see the prospect of US troops at the gates of Baghdad as providing scope for a deal if the US or the right foreign government hints that a prolonged but "humane" siege is likely, in lieu of a destructive assault.

(b)(3)

Even if Turkey cannot be restrained from implementing its contingency plans to occupy parts of the north, the US might be able to make use of this as part of a mind game. Saddam probably assumes invading Turks would have their hands full with the Kurds, and that both Turks and Kurds would bargain with Baghdad to avoid clashing with Iraqi forces.

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- If it appeared, however, that the Kurds and Turks had made their own deal to keep their knives away from each other's throats, Saddam's sense of controlling the battlefield might be shaken in ways that cause him to disperse reliable troops or take provocative actions that solidify international support for US military action. [REDACTED] (b)(3)

Saddam is a classic victimizer, turning his subordinates and the Iraqi people into perversely loyal drones filled with repressed anger and resentment. While it is difficult to liberate victims from obedient paralysis, Saddam might one day push a close associate too far, cathartically releasing a lethal response. Although suspicious of everyone and, like a mob boss, quick to kill at the merest whiff of betrayal, Saddam might miss a plot concocted by a toady he has browbeaten for years.

- An information war offensive that plays to the theme of Saddam's inner circle pushed over the edge by his idiosyncratic tyranny—in effect playing back on Saddam the Sadat scenario of assassination by his own security people—might exploit the dictator's paranoia and provoke a purge, to US advantage.
- As the pressures of war increase and associates see Saddam willing to sacrifice everyone else on a heretofore-unimagined scale, stories that subordinates will ditch Saddam to save themselves become more credible. [REDACTED] (b)(3)

If Saddam has a "values compass," its magnetic needle points only at Saddam himself. Playing off of his goals and values—all nicely rational and coherent in his own mind—is another tack for influencing behavior. Power, prestige, and idolatry are Saddam's food, air, and water. Depriving him of this sustenance could throw him off stride.

- Destroying his symbols of omnipotence—palaces, statues, monuments, and images—and inducing Arabs states, France, and Russia—in whose respect Saddam finds aspects of his self-image—to show instead scorn, contempt, and slight regard might frustrate and distract him.
- Anti-Saddam agitations from the vaunted "Arab Street" sprawling across Arab media outlets—especially popular satellite channels on which Saddam counts to get his propaganda out to the world—would undercut his pretensions as exemplary "hero of all Arabs." [REDACTED] (b)(3)

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Special Memorandum

18 March 2003

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(b)(3)

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments to the DCI Red Cell at [redacted]

If Saddam Should Accept Exile . . . [redacted]

(b)(3)

Saddam might gamble that an eleventh-hour acceptance of exile will buy time—either for UNSC foes of war to delay military action until the dust settled in Baghdad or for his own efforts to mount a surprise WMD attack as coalition forces are lulled into a false sense of security. Saddam might even send one of his doubles into exile while he remains in Iraq. Saddam's actual departure would probably prompt widespread international reluctance to press a successor regime too soon on WMD. Longer-term problems would include assuaging Iraqi concerns that Saddam's crimes will go unpunished and devising guarantees that the new regime will truly differ from the old order.

(b)(3)

With exile the only option left for Saddam other than war, the Red Cell speculates on how he might try to manipulate a "final" offer. [redacted]

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Is He for Real? (S//NF)

If Saddam confounds expectations and actually accepts exile, the most immediate challenge would be ascertaining whether the move is for real or only a ploy. Saddam might calculate that gaining even a few hours of maneuver would give the French or Russians a chance to introduce a UNSC resolution calling for a suspension of military action until the situation in Iraq "clarified itself."

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- A best case for Saddam might be such a "wait-for-war" resolution, followed by a US and UK veto [redacted]

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A number of other pitfalls lie in wait should Saddam seem to accept a last-minute exile:

- **Stall.** Saddam might try to use an exile bid to start a new round of negotiations as he remains in control. States trying to prevent a war would play along. To head this off, any exile offer would need to be non-negotiable and offered on a take it or leave it basis—with the clock ticking and a plane waiting to fly the dictator off.
- **Is it him?** Another challenge would be determining if it is truly Saddam who has gone into exile or one of his doubles. Knowing such a ruse would eventually be found out, Saddam might use the period of uncertainty to launch a preemptive WMD attack, hoping to find the coalition forces off guard.
- **"My way."** Saddam might depart on his own terms, going to a friendly country, like Syria or Belarus, while leaving a trusted surrogate behind to run the country. Or he might claim to be leaving—or send a double—while remaining in Iraq. [redacted]

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Potential Pitfalls of Verified Exile [redacted]

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A decision for exile would pose to the coalition a different set of challenges. [redacted]

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Disarmament. For many governments, the case for disarming Iraq is based on getting WMD out of the hands of a dangerous megalomaniac. With Saddam gone, some states will probably be willing to give a new regime a pass on WMD.

- We would expect international—and particularly Arab states—pressure to limit the number of US and UK forces entering post-Saddam Iraq to verify disarmament, in favor of relying on UNMOVIC inspectors. [REDACTED]

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Power Vacuum. Saddam's exit—whether real or faked—before Iraq is occupied by US and UK forces might result in a dangerous power vacuum or a splintering of the country into Kurdish, Sunni, and Shi'a regions. This might lead to loss of control over secret WMD stocks, and the possibility that faction leaders, rebels, or even terrorists might get them.

- Outside powers—Iran and Turkey—would be tempted to intervene. An exile deal would need to be accompanied by rapid occupation of key points by an international force that included US and UK troops already in the Gulf. [REDACTED]

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Splits Over Sunni Rule. If the succession issue emerged before Iraq's occupation by coalition forces, the international community would probably split again over the successor regime, with the Russia, France, and the Arab states arguing for a Sunni regime as acceptable, and the US, Britain, and others demanding more far-reaching changes.

- Kurdish and Shi'a Iraqis might see Saddam's departure as an opportunity to topple a confused and weakened successor regime. If Kurdish and Shi'a rebels were to seize control of their local areas and then demand US support, Washington could be faced with a situation similar to the aftermath of the war in 1991.
- Even Iraqi Sunnis might be discomfited. With Saddam and his senior henchman gone, lines of authority and loyalty would be unclear, especially in the security forces, clearing the way for ambitious cliques of lower-ranking officers to bid for power. Saddam's departure might open the door to a series of destabilizing coups as various factions within Iraq struggled for control of the new regime. [REDACTED]

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Justice Denied? The greatest long-term danger would be a successor who said all the right things but who, once attention focused elsewhere, would become a new Saddam and resurrect Iraq's WMD program. Even if all WMD were destroyed, the expertise to build new ones, including nuclear weapons, will remain. Without a basic change in the nature of the Iraqi state, few ways exist of guaranteeing that a successor regime would eschew WMD.

- The Iraqi people and the exile community would feel betrayed and abandoned if Saddam went into a comfortable exile and was able to leave a Sunni military leader in charge. Exempting Saddam and his henchmen—arguably the prime perpetrators of massive crimes against humanity during the past two decades—from accountability would set a dangerous precedent and deny a sense of justice and closure. [REDACTED]

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FROM CIA OPS CENTER



Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Special Memorandum

18 December 2002

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments to the DCI Red Cell at [redacted]

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Unintended Consequences of Victory in Iraq [redacted]

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A US-led occupation of Iraq would shake up the Middle East in ways not seen since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Unanticipated consequences from victory are likely to stem from how effective post war supplicants are in enlisting US power to fulfill their aims; how wide a gap there is between US perceptions that it is a liberator versus foreign perceptions that it is an empire builder; whether WMD is perceived as effective in holding off the US; and how key foreign players react to a US occupation of an oil rich state in the heart of the Arab world. [redacted]

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The Red Cell was asked to think about how unintended consequences might play out in the aftermath of US operations against Iraq. As part of this effort, we joined CIA's Strategic Assessments Group and Office of Terrorism Analysis in hosting a session with outside experts on how developments in Iraq and other parts of the world might affect the future of anti-US political violence. [redacted]

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A New Middle East Balance Made In America [redacted]

Following the end of Saddam's regime, Washington will be inundated with supplicants—everyone from disgruntled ethnic groups and private interests to human rights groups who label their personal dragons as Saddam equivalents worthy of similar treatment. These groups will play American politics to the fullest extent to achieve their parochial aims.

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- Following World War I, Middle East players like the Armenians, the Kurds, and Jewish settlers in Palestine were disappointed that the US rejected League of Nations mandates in their region. This time, many of the same players will see a chance to replay history with an outcome more favorable to enlisting US power on their behalf.
- If the US is perceived as reordering the Middle East to suit its clients, we fear a growing gap between Americans who see the liberation of Iraq and others who see America aping British and French moves after 1918. Although perceptions of "American imperialism" will be overheated, the conquest of Iraq will increase the problems of managing a virtual empire—seen as an increasingly formal management by Americans and American clients of territories and resources in the Middle East.

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In terms of using victory over Saddam to gain ground in the ideological war against Islamist extremists, the US may face more trouble that it expects from perceived contradictions between a declared goal of democratic change in Iraq and a declared goal of preserving the regional stability that Saddam threatens.

- No regime in Baghdad has integrated the fragmented, mutually suspicious Kurds and Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs who were forced together into the "Iraq" created by the British after World War I. Knitting these peoples together will take much time and money and will depend more on the development of mutual interests than on the usual international hortatory slogans of "nation-building" and "rule of law." Gratitude

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- for liberation would give way all too quickly to Iraqi tribes seeing US aid as a zero sum game, with discontent on any side exploitable by US enemies. [REDACTED]

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As in the case dealings with Milosevic in Serbia or with warlords in Afghanistan, it may be tempting to forego the difficulties of democratization for practical, ad hoc arrangements with Iraqi generals or local notables who will demand a US blind eye towards their methods of post Saddam rule in return for a guarantee of peace and quiet.

- The choice between comprehensive political change and using Saddam's leftovers for "crisis management" could become stark if Saddam tries to ensure that his demise leads to an even more damaged region by creating a Kurdish refugee stampede into Turkey in order to force a Turkish intervention the Kurds would resist; a Shia exodus into Iran to bring Iranian forces into Iraq; or destroying Iraqi oil fields and thus the financial base for reconstruction. [REDACTED]

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American Occupation of A Core Arab Muslim State [REDACTED]

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The occupation of Iraq, especially if US forces remain in Saudi Arabia, will station US soldiers at the heart of the Muslim world, putting an American shadow over the Shi'ite shrines in southern Iraq while still in proximity to Mecca and Medina. US troops might too easily expect to be greeted the way the US was welcomed in Western Europe in 1944-45 or in Kuwait in 1991.

- Envy and resentment could manifest themselves in a sullen or even hostile attitude on the part of some Iraqi Arabs—especially Sunnis whose domination has been ended by US intervention—toward their American "liberators".
- Reactions by Iraqi civilians that surprise US forces could result in incidents (including orchestrated confrontations) that would be magnified by Arab media and especially by a clerical establishment already prone to vitriolic criticism of the US. Recent events in South Korea show how dangerous such stories can be. [REDACTED]

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The widespread conviction in the Muslim world, following victory in Iraq, that an all-powerful US ought now to be able to settle the Israeli-Palestinian dispute increases the danger that lack of progress will "prove" that Israel and "Jewish interests" control US policy.

- Arab critics may even compare the conduct of US soldiers in Iraq to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Barring signs of progress in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, the US could soon be portrayed as a super-sized version of Israel in its occupation of Arab lands, with the remnant of Saddam's regime or other US enemies stirring up Intifada type resistance for CNN cameras.
- At the same time, the danger exists that Israeli Prime Minister Sharon would use Palestinian demonstrations in support of Saddam, especially if Saddam strikes at Israel, to expel Palestinians from the West Bank into Jordan—an unintended consequence of war that could doom Hashemite rule in Jordan. [REDACTED]

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American Control Of Oil [REDACTED]

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US ground forces in physical control of Iraqi oil wells for a prolonged period and US naval and air forces astride oil routes from the Persian Gulf could result in unexpected perceptions in major states and among extremist groups outside the Middle East.

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- China needs Persian Gulf oil to fuel the high rates of economic growth essential to cope with rising unemployment. Those senior military officers who already take a jaundiced view of Jiang's pro-US tack could argue that power projection capabilities must be speeded against the day the US plays an "oil card" with Beijing. In terms of unanticipated consequences, it is worth remembering that de facto US control of its oil supplies was seen in Washington as a tool for constraining Japanese militarists when in fact it proved decisive in tilting a divided Tokyo toward confrontation in 1941.
- A common European and Latin American leftist critique is that the US wants to capture Iraq's oil. To the extent quasi-Marxist groups can rekindle protest against "American capitalists/imperialists" an unintended result of war with Iraq might be political extremism that comes to reprise the "terrorist chic" of the 1970s, with opportunities for al-Qa'ida to recruit operatives able to move more easily in the US. [REDACTED]

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The Attractions of WMD [REDACTED]

A major unintended consequence of war in Iraq might be the growing attractiveness of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons—even if Saddam loses. If Iraqi WMD delays a US victory, states like North Korea and Iran will take notice. While aware of the risk that WMD is a magnet for unwelcome US attention, such states might count on a global horror effect of casualties and environmental damage to constrain action against them.

- Saddam's forced submission to successive rounds of UN inspections and then to an American invasion would also stand in stark contrast to the ability of a nuclear armed Pakistan to hold off a more powerful India, or a North Korea which—despite its poverty and relative international isolation—thwarted US demands and maintained independence of action explicitly by developing and brandishing WMD capabilities.
- The lesson of Saddam's serial failures since the Iran-Iraq War might be that it pays to obtain secretly and fast WMD and the other necessary sinews of power before embarking on any adventures likely to attract US attention. Rather than warning off WMD proliferation, a war in Iraq might see an acceleration in procurement—with WMD merchants like A.Q. Khan the winners. [REDACTED]

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Special Memorandum

8 October 2002

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments to the DCI Red Cell at [redacted]

"Occupied Iraq"—Thinking About Post-Saddam Governance [redacted] (b)(3)

British imperial experience in Egypt and Iraq and contemporary experiences in the Balkans and Afghanistan may be more useful precedents for administering post-Saddam Iraq than the occupation of Germany and Japan after World War II. International troops and bureaucrats are likely to lack the clean slate provided by collapse of the old order seen in 1945, and the US and its partners will be under the scrutiny of opportunistic neighbors highly suspicious of the US presence. Earlier Western experience may point to lessons for how the US can maintain a predominant voice while avoiding international expectations that Washington alone will be responsible for stability, development strategy, and footing occupation costs. [redacted] (b)(3)

The Red Cell was asked to comment on the relevance of the German and Japanese occupations to post-Saddam Iraq. We see several limitations in the WWII models and offer some thoughts on other possible precedents for administering Iraq "the day after." [redacted] (b)(3)

Vast Differences in Culture and Context [redacted] (b)(3)

The occupations of Germany and Japan took place after the destruction of the regimes and of much of the economic and social fabric of the two countries. Moreover, the entire European and East Asian worlds were prostrate and at the Allies' mercy—there were no neighboring centers of power or ideology to oppose the will of the victors. [redacted] (b)(3)

- Germany and Japan both had strong socio-economic foundations for rebuilding: ethnic homogeneity, the legitimacy of national unity, a well-educated workforce, and modern industrial organization.
- Before WW II Germany had experimented with democracy (albeit one viewed by many constituents as illegitimate) and Japan had experienced forms of pluralism within a modernizing military-dominated imperial system. [redacted] (b)(3)

Iraq has none of this. Its monarchs and autocrats have manipulated the country's communities and tribes more than they have encouraged the development of a national political culture. Dissatisfaction at the distribution of power and resources has been dealt with through uprisings and coups. The notion of a rule—important in German political culture—or the sense of belonging to a millennium-long cultural order as in Japan has no resonance in a country that has existed only since the end of WWI.

- Iraq was created by Anglo-French decree from three Ottoman provinces and still reflects regional distinctions between Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra and between the country's Kurdish, Sunni, and Shi'a populations.
- International occupiers are thus better viewed as analogous to earlier imperial and mandatory overlords of a notional "Iraq" rather than to temporary occupiers of well-established nations in Germany and Japan [redacted] (b)(3) (b)(3)

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Rather than the global exhaustion of 1945—which for a few years limited competing ambitions and agendas of Germany's and Japan's neighbors—the context for Iraq's occupiers will be one of post-Saddam Iraqi factions and neighboring states all looking at an occupation by non-Muslims and scenting opportunities to push parochial agendas.

- Turkey desires a role in northern Iraq. Many Iranians vigorously resent and oppose US power. The Saudis will compete with Iran for influence in southern Iraq. Jordanian Hashimites may dream about a restoration of their family in Iraq.
- And overhanging Iraq's occupation would be the general Arab expectation that a victorious US will now finally move to solve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. [REDACTED]

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British Imperial Models . . . [REDACTED]

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Examples such as the British administration in Egypt that developed before World War I and UK policies in Iraq itself after 1918 might have more relevance to post-war Iraq. Just as the international community does not seek a colony in Iraq, London did not initially seek to control Egypt—it wanted to protect its route to India through the Suez Canal. However, the weakness of notional Ottoman overlords of Egypt, the incompetence of Egypt's government, and rivalry with the French led the British eventually to take control of Egypt's finances and foreign policy.

- Local politicians and a nominally independent ruler handled day-to-day affairs under the eye of a British "agent" whose authority was buttressed by a relatively small military presence. The British engaged in laborious bargaining with other states having a stake in Egyptian debt but were generally able to get their way while satisfying the stakeholders. [REDACTED]

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Similarly, the British did not rule the new "Iraq" directly after World War I. London ensconced an Arabian king in Baghdad and ruled Iraq as a formal and then informal protectorate. When Iraq's "independence" was declared, the British remained the predominant influence and retained a small military base in the country until 1958. [REDACTED]

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Lessons for the US from the British experience focus on the ability to defend strategic interests—once the Suez and oil, now oil and the taming of a rogue regime harboring WMD—with relatively small military forces, using local politicians, and relying on relatively soft power.

- In neither Egypt nor Iraq did the British claim to be installing any version of Western democracy. Rather, they attempted to institute more honest administration, promote stability, and defend their geopolitical interests.
- A credible Arab government in Baghdad might shield the US from responsibility for running the country's affairs and from fears that we intend to destroy Arab regimes and transform them in our image—a fear raised by the discussion of the post-WWII models, even among US allies in the Arab world. [REDACTED]

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. . . and Contemporary Alternatives [REDACTED]

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The international community could opt for a Balkan model for Iraq, in recognition of the weakness of any post Saddam polity and the need for a prolonged US and coalition military presence to contain regional and communal differences—as NATO forces have done in Bosnia and Kosovo. International supervisors would oversee all aspects of Iraqi government, even as they imposed a constitution (written mainly by Western lawyers), elections, and the other forms of "democracy."

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- As in the Balkans, local Iraqi notables would quickly learn the rhetoric of democratic palaver while attempting to manipulate international officials to their side of parochial interests.
- We surmise, however, that the strength of tribal and other loyalties and, conversely, the unfinished nature of "Iraqi identity" would retard political development; "national" leaders would try to play both ends—family and tribal interests and the international community—off each other. [REDACTED]

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Nevertheless, as in the Balkans, the overwhelming power of the occupying forces would maintain a baseline stability. Iraq might not soon be able to stand on its own but might be relatively quiet. However, Iraq's neighborhood is more dangerous than that of Bosnia and Kosovo, and the danger of spillover from a crisis in Iran, Jordan, or Palestine would be greater than any danger to SFOR or KFOR from problems in Serbia or Macedonia. [REDACTED]

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An "Afghan alternative" presumes a softer international hand on Iraq. International forces would protect a notional "central" government but would focus on removing WMD and terrorist infrastructure and not on reshaping regional and tribal autonomies or other actions popularly known as "nation building." Local power brokers would be accommodated either in Baghdad or their home regions, and international forces would pursue fewer immediate pretensions to establishing a Western political order.

- This Iraq might be messier than under the Balkan model. A leaner international administration would permit more local and inter-communal ferment, which neighbors like Iran or Turkey could exploit. But it might also leave the locals more responsible and more likely to blame problems on their own leaders rather than on the US or international forces. As in Afghanistan, the US would face international criticism for not being assertive enough in rebuilding Iraq. [REDACTED]

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Soft Power vs. Hard Power [REDACTED]

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Debate over models of post Saddam occupation point to the strategic choices facing the international community: To what extent should the international community rule directly or through surrogates after Saddam? Do the US and its partners want to aggressively pursue political change in Iraq or will they be satisfied simply to keep the place reasonably quiet? How much time and effort are necessary to create conditions for a free-standing democracy? [REDACTED]

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Soft power may turn out to be the best arrow in the US quiver. The unprecedented reach of US traditions of freedom, secularism, and popular culture attracts imitators as it enrages enemies. Ability to use American norms as well as US power creates opportunities with a secular and well educated Iraqi elite, especially if Muslim allies help tailor the US message to local audiences.

- Whatever political structure emerges in the immediate wake of Saddam's regime, the growth of cultural activity by Iraqis empowered to create, express, and criticize—international occupiers as well as local politicians and Mullahs—could accelerate modernization and open at least some to adopt an "Iraqi identity" broader than family, tribe, and creed. [REDACTED]

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Report

Number 86

9 October 2002

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments to the DCI Red Cell at [redacted]

How Saddam Might Draw Out a WMD-less Fight [redacted]

(b)(3)

Even in the face of widespread defections, Saddam may believe he can prolong a conflict—without using WMD—by shaping the battleground and retreating to the cities with a small number of Special Republican Guard personnel with nothing to lose and determined to make the US face what the Russians faced in Grozny. In developing such a strategy, Saddam can draw on lessons from his Iran-Iraq and Gulf wars, US and Western doctrine since the early 1990s, and Russian defeats at the hands of the Chechens. Several preemptive and real-time approaches might mitigate a Saddam plan to wage a "hyper-conventionalized" fight. [redacted]

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The Red Cell [redacted] offers a (b)(1)
speculative assessment of how Saddam might protract the struggle and up its costs— (b)(3)
without using WMD. [redacted] (b)(3)

Could Saddam Be Thinking Outside his WMD Box? [redacted]

(b)(3)

We see three strategic premises that might guide Saddam's thinking about an avant garde, non-WMD war with the US and its Allies:

- **Saddam as Needle in Iraqi Haystack:** Saddam may see advantages in US angst over Usama Bin Ladin's inconclusive fate and from this sense an American allergy to (b)(3)
any Iraq campaign that falls short of physically collaring him. In a calculation in which Saddam sees himself as his own best bait, he may script a fight that beckons the US to put boots on the ground whose mission is as much a "Saddam ghost hunt" as defeat of Iraqi military and security forces.
- **America's Grozny.** Saddam realistically recognizes US air supremacy and reckons that a mainstay of the Allied campaign will come from above. So, too, it is likely he sees Beirut, Mogadishu, and Mazar-e Sharif as evidence of Western reluctance to take on a ground battle in urban environs; as such, Saddam probably sees the Taliban's self exile from Afghan cities as a strategic blunder. Given his links to Arab terrorists and Russian military veterans, he may also find compelling urban-warfare lessons from Chechen tactics used in the First and Second Battles for Grozny.
- **Stewardship of the Battlescape:** Iraq successfully engineered its military landscape throughout the 1980s and 90s, whether in fighting with Iran, northern Kurds, or Shia marsh Arabs in the south. Baghdad adroitly flooded or drained vast expanses; built large-area earthen works; trenched and filled open areas to control insurgent habitat, attackers' avenues of approach, and cover and concealment; and bulldozed urban areas to open fields of fire and maneuver for loyal forces. (S//REL)

Saddam may also have convinced himself that once US ground forces enter Iraq, the US will be in a battleground he has had years to groom and on his terms. Saddam does have (b)(3)
the potential advantage of learning from Taliban mistakes. [redacted] (b)(3)

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Even with robust defections among Iraqi troops, Saddam might believe he can call on elite units, who, like Hitler's SS, will fight to the death because they believe their fate is sealed. Taking advantage of a skilled combat engineering corps and then coiling residual forces in cities and applying ruthless tactics, Saddam (like Hitler) may convince himself he can prolong the fight and make the price of engagement so dear as to fracture the coalition against him and face the US with irresistible pressure to bargain with a battered but fundamentally unbowed dictator.

- Saddam might not need to personally hole up in a city. He might think he can keep vestigial command and control of some forces whilst on the lam, using US preoccupation with him to orchestrate Elvis-like sightings that are sufficiently enticing to draw a risky investiture of his cities if only to negate allegations of his presence.

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Taking it to the Streets, Grozny Style

(b)(3)

Even decimated units retreating to city fighting—more likely, elite units held back from exposure to US power—could be exhorted to toe the line by coercion and propaganda built on claims of American unwillingness to take casualties in street fighting and fortified with shots of “successes” such as those Chechens enjoyed in Grozny against better-equipped and -supplied Russians.

- Were Saddam able to cajole even limited numbers of well-supplied and desperate troops to dig into urban areas, inspired but ill-armed insurrection against him within the cities could be ruthlessly dispatched, allowing Saddam to claim to the Arab world and the US that he still represents the legitimate government of Iraq whatever defections occur elsewhere in the country, and that the world must bargain with him.
- In the wake of strategic retreat into the cities, it would be well within Saddam's historical pattern of behavior to inflict heinous abuses on cowed masses to throw humanitarian spanners into an allied advance, scripting disinformation along the way to tar the US with the stigma of causing humanitarian disaster.

(b)(3)

To hold in the face of determined assault, Saddam's fanatical remnant in urban areas could resort to guerrilla tactics taken from the Chechen playbook used with such effect against Russia:

- **RPG Weapon of Choice:** A Chechen weapon of choice was the rocket-propelled grenade. These offer the blast power to go through walls and are equally effective for small kill zones in flat-trajectory attacks or “lobbing” shots over buildings.
- **Hug thy Target:** Chechen urban guerrilla units operated as close as possible to Russian forces to minimize their advantages in standoff firepower. Such tactics might also be seen as degrading US advantages in command and control, and pushing critical tactical responsibility well down in the command structure in ways that would make it harder for Saddam's commanders to surrender larger units.
- **Gruesome Psyche:** Chechens decapitated Russian dead and prisoners, placing skulls along reinforcements' avenues of approach and hanging cadavers in street-level windows as screens from behind which guerrillas rained fires and through which Russians soldiers had to assail the enemy. Saddam might see this as an effective way to undermine international resolve and increase pressure to “negotiate at any price” rather than continue such fighting

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- **Improvisation and Knowledge of the Battlefield:** Chechens demonstrated the critical ability to improvise weapons—using RPGs as mortars, for instance—and to turn pagers, ad hoc TV stations, and the Internet into tactical communications gear. Chechens also made good use of their knowledge of the urban battlefield—fighting at, above, and below street level and establishing ambush points and escape routes. [redacted]

(b)(3)

WMD: "Water of Mass Destruction"? [redacted]

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Saddam might draw on Iraq's 5,000-year history of large-scale water-movement schemes. In 1983, Iraq inundated 250 square kilometers on the southern war front with Iran. Baghdad's combat engineers rapidly sculpted drains, canals, berms, levies, and dams and seasonally juggled militaristic floods with jury-rigged drainage. Then as now, water diversion schemes are abundantly fed in spring and summer, peak snowmelt season. Some analysts judge that Saddam already has sufficient reservoir capacity to flood Baghdad's western and southern flanks.

- Iraq might rapidly impede or even envelop advancing forces by linking or decoupling existing hydrological control features that manage flows between Al Basrah in the south and Baghdad to the north. We would expect Saddam to use water as a weapon early in the conflict; waiting too long gives the US and its allies the opportunity to degrade Saddam's ability to adjust water control schema to military purposes.
- Baghdad proper is hydrologically buffered between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. The Tigris threads through the city and offers sufficient water year round to move and shunt flows in advance of an attacker and possibly to even frustrate a siege. [redacted]

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Creative use of water might replace use of dirt in Saddam's war plans. [redacted]

[redacted] Given lack of success with dirt barriers and traps during the Gulf war—Iraqi vehicles fell into them more often than did coalition vehicles—Saddam might see such efforts as offering little more promise this time. The qualitative edge of US mechanized forces might render such work feckless; cross-country movement might be hampered and canalized just as effectively by the manmade and natural landscape; and Saddam can play the "hydrological card" to greater effect with little or no up-front cost. [redacted]

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Throwing Off Saddam's Urban Combat Plans [redacted]

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Several pre-emptive and real-time moves might be a hedge against the advantages Saddam would see in hyper-conventionalizing the war:

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Report

Number 110

28 March

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After Saddam: Could Revenge Become Mass Murder?

The destruction of Saddam's Ba'thist regime could see an unleashing of and religious emotions, possibly reaching the level that produced mass murder in Rwanda and Burundi. Media reports of revenge-based ethnic or sectarian atrocities would eclipse US success in ousting Saddam. Because coalition forces will be physically unable to head off every threatened instance of atrocity, repeated public warnings to opposition leaders and the Iraqi populace may be needed—even as combat goes on—to help contain the risk of large-scale revenge killings. Suggesting a preventive UN role might embarrass France and Russia into desisting from obstructing post-Saddam planning.

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The DCI Red Cell

[redacted] speculates on the risk that ethnic and religious clashes could escalate into mass killings. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(3) (b)(3) (b)(3)

Hour of Defeat, Hour of Revenge

As Saddam's instruments of coercion collapse under coalition blows, [redacted] Shia tribes in the south and Kurds in the north are likely to extract retribution against Ba'th party members and security forces.

[redacted] The circumstances in which Basra falls might be the first test of coalition ability to prevent large-scale revenge killings. [redacted] (b)(3)

The tribal and religious emotions that will be released as Saddam's regime falls strike us as uncomfortably similar to those behind ethnic clashes that escalated into genocide in Rwanda and Burundi in 1994. Although the historical animosity between Sunni and Shia pales in comparison to the blood feuds of the Hutu and Tutsi, years of repression, violence, and murders by Saddam's regime are spark and tinder for an inevitable (b)(1) conflagration. (b)(3)

- In Rwanda and Burundi, the key issues were power sharing in the government, property rights, and extremist views on the hereditary rights of each clan. Similar issues are likely to emerge in post-Saddam Iraq.

- Other factors that contributed to the Rwanda-Burundi genocides were the availability of weapons, previous human-rights violations, racist propaganda, and militia complicity in massacres. All these factors also exist in Iraq. [redacted] (b)(3)

The Sunni-dominated militia have suppressed the Shia and Kurds by dislocation, imprisonment, and execution, all of which are shaded with communal overtones. Although the Shia have access to weapons, the Sunni have better training and superior weaponry. The Kurds, with US help, have been able to hold their own against the Republican Guard.

- As the Ba'thist hold in the south collapses and civil war possibly breaks out in Baghdad, the Sunnis could be split over maintaining loyalty to Saddam. A Sunni split

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could mirror the split between Hutu extremists and moderates that helped open the way to mass killings in Central Africa.

- In the north, the possibility of killings mounting to wholesale ethnic cleansing could occur when Kurds return to Kirkuk to reclaim homes and property lost in Saddam's Arabization program. More than a million Kurds have been displaced from their homes in Kirkuk and the surrounding regions.
- Turks and Turkomans could help perpetrate mass slaughter in the north if Turkish forces move aggressively to prevent formation of an independent Kurdish state.

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Invaders As Peacekeepers

(b)(3)

The disintegration of the regime before US and coalition forces are in place in Baghdad and other sensitive locations could provide the stimulus for ethnic purges. Such violent anarchy might put isolated coalition units in the precarious position faced by US forces when surrounded by hostile mobs in the Somali capital of Mogadishu.

- Coalition forces already contending with the Iraqi military could confront Shia and Sunni civilians engaged in a blood feud. An all too plausible scenario might find coalition units in a firefight with Iraqi forces as a simultaneous riot breaks out between ethnic and religious groups—with all four contending for the same ground.

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Several steps by coalition forces might limit the danger that localized and individual acts of revenge against Saddam's men will get out of control.

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Leaflet Campaign. Messages and instructions might be conveyed and followed that would limit participation in ethnic barbarities. Iraqis are indeed reading, distributing, and following the instructions provided in coalition leaflet drops. Casualties during recent bombing runs were significantly reduced when Iraqis stayed away from work during the designated time and targets were successfully destroyed.

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Confiscating Weapons. Removal of weapons from the general Iraqi populace and militia and then forming an ethnically diverse Iraqi security force could be crucial steps in limiting the opportunities for mass killings. To this end, locating caches of regular arms and chemical-biological weapons and preventing weapons disbursements to ethnic groups may be as much a priority as keeping such caches from criminals or terrorists.

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Establishing Legal Forums. Establishing an interim judicial system with the three major ethnic groups equally represented could reduce ethnic tensions and offer reassurance that justice will be served through law, not vengeance.

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Coalition and International Presence. Having US or UK forces occupy regions where ethnic or religious factions could square off would have an ameliorating affect on tensions and reduce the likelihood of killings on a large scale. Asking for an expeditious UN contribution to policing especially dangerous areas might lessen the risk that coalition forces will get caught in an ethnic crossfire—and could force France and Russia to "put up or shut up" on their supposed interest in sparing the Iraqi people from mayhem.

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Special Memorandum

10 March 2003

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Anticipating Saddam's Last-Gasp Gambits [redacted]

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As Saddam's options diminish, he may exploit the latest Blix report or President Bush's press conference for last-minute ploys in the hope of forestalling an invasion. Saddam might announce his intention to comply with key demands, perhaps by hauling all his WMD to visible inspection zones, agreeing to honor a "full-compliance" deadline along the lines of Canada's proposal, turning over Zarqawi or other terrorists, or offering to go into exile after negotiations to "safeguard Iraqi interests." Saddam might even fake a coup, expecting an UNSC call for the US to stay its hand until the Iraqi political situation was sorted out. Any or all such 11th-hour gambits might induce war-wary states to dispatch delegations to Iraq, the presence of which might, in Saddam's calculus, complicate US military action. [redacted]

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The Red Cell was asked to speculate on the sorts of last-minute tactics Saddam might use to forestall an imminent invasion once the UNSC concludes its deliberations. (S//NF)

Last Dance—The "Saddam Stall" [redacted]

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Although Saddam is probably gratified that he has sown divisions in the UNSC, he may be concerned that this will not do him much good in light of continued US resolve. As Saddam calculates ploys to buy additional time before US action, he may mine aspects of the latest Blix report or President Bush's recent press conference for ideas. In doing so, he might take particular care to hit sensitive notes that:

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- Take advantage of the desire [redacted] to thwart US action or at least delay an invasion as long as possible.

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- Seem directly responsive to points raised in the Blix report and in the US President's press conference so that the US would face overwhelming pressures to pursue these in the interest peace. [redacted]

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Empty the Cookie Jar [redacted]

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Saddam's track record of drawing out inspections *ad nauseum* suggests that seeming to make new concessions on WMD inspections would be one option. In agreeing to destroy his missile stocks, Saddam can claim that he has displayed willingness to sacrifice his WMD to thwart an invasion. He can now cite Blix, who noted the missile destruction as a significant positive development, and, if feeling imminent US military heat, offer to follow up on an more extensive scale—while saving selected weapons of choice should he face an invasion. Saddam might:

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- Exploit US/UK interest in a short deadline by offering his own "date certain" for full compliance as Iraqi officials "discover" new weapons caches. Saddam might see a "short deadline" for full WMD disclosure—two months out or so—as well worth the loss of inventory if he believed the worldwide gratitude and relief at his "concession" would force a US delay until hot weather. Saddam would be confident he could later wriggle out of his own deadline.

[redacted]

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- Take up the US President's challenge and start to place suspected WMD materials "in a parking lot" or open field—inviting the UN and even the US to inspect and destroy the material. Saddam might believe that yielding to a White House dare would significantly increase pressure on the US to agree "inspections are working."

[redacted]

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- Build on UNMOVIC claims that Iraq is being more responsive on interviews with scientists by allowing a set number of carefully selected experts to be taken abroad—with their immediate families—for interviews. Again, the idea would be to ostensibly meet a UN and US demand, and to force calls for a delay in military action until "free and unfettered interviews" were complete.
- Invite the US to set up a base in Iraq to join the search for WMD, a possibility raised in one intelligence report. If Saddam made such a desperate offer in public, calls for the US to exploit this "dramatic concession" before starting a war would be loud and long. [redacted]

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Exit Saddam [redacted]

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Saddam might also try to stall by addressing President Bush's comments that exile is an acceptable outcome as long as a successor regime disarms. We can conceive a range of imaginative ways that Saddam might use this opening to create confusion and pressure on the US to "wait for the dust to settle" before embarking on war.

- **Exile offer.** Saddam could accept the Saudi offer of exile but first require "brief" negotiations over terms that would guarantee the safety of Saddam himself, his entourage, and their families, and would define the modalities by which a successor regime would disarm. Saddam could invite a high-level foreign emissary—such as the Russian or Saudi foreign minister—to Baghdad, dragging out talks while Saddam plots his next move.
- **Resignation.** Saddam might try to achieve similar results by resigning and putting someone in his place who could be controlled from behind the scenes.
- **Fake coup.** Because so many foreign states have hoped for a brave general to depose Saddam, the dictator might stage a coup himself, using his doubles to sow confusion about his fate—perhaps even "executing" one a la Ceaucescu—and continuing to run the show from behind the scenes. A loyal general might pretend to

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take power and proclaim intentions to fully cooperate in disarming Iraq, turning over a limited number of weapons to show his sincerity but preserving most of Iraq's capability. Once Saddam thought weather or political conditions no longer permitted a US invasion, he could reemerge in a counter coup and regain power.

- **Election day.** Saddam might try to use the US President's vision of a democratic Iraq to "agree to pressure from the West" for a transition to democracy. Saddam could agree to call a constituent assembly that would result in internationally monitored "free elections" and a transfer of power to take place in a few months. [redacted]

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Join the War on Terrorism [redacted]

(b)(3)

Saddam might exploit the more detailed US charges linking him to terrorism and offer to "join the war" by tracking down and expelling the al-Qa`ida members believed to be in Iraq. Just as Saddam dispatched Abu Nidal when the terrorist was no longer useful, Saddam might arrest Zarqawi and some of his supporters and promise to turn them over to the West, once details are worked out—which would prove to be a process sufficiently long to make US military action more difficult.

- Given warnings about the poison plant by both the US President and Secretary of State, Saddam could say that, although he does not control northeast Iraq, he invites foreign forces—even those of the US—to go after al-Qa`ida in the Kurdish areas.

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Create a Diversion. [redacted]

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Although it would be more difficult for Saddam to orchestrate a sufficiently large diversion to disrupt a US invasion, several gambits remain available to a desperate dictator.

- **North Korea.** Saddam might see escalating tension in Korea as the best prospect of diverting the US from Iraq. He might offer Kim Chong-il a massive monetary incentive to stage a military confrontation with the US.

- **Middle East.** Saddam might try to stall US action by destabilizing a key US ally in the Middle East. [redacted]

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- **Terrorist attack.** Using Iraqi security personnel positioned abroad, Saddam could launch a major terrorist attack or series of attacks against the US or US interests that he would try to attribute to al-Qa`ida.

- **Preemptive strike.** A really desperate Saddam looking for any way to stall a US attack, even for a few days, might gamble on preemptive WMD strikes on the US forces deploying against him. Saddam would know that such action would draw down on him possibly unprecedented military wrath, but he might count on the shock value of first use of WMD to induce calls for a ceasefire before more WMD was used.

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Report

Number 111

1 April 2003

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Can The Coalition Kick-Start A Rising in the South? [redacted]

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In the battle for Shia opinion, Saddam's continued access to the airwaves and his thugs' presence in the south may be overshadowing the growing coalition military pressure. Intimidation by the regime's killers is magnified by a coalition strategy that initially bypassed southern cities on the way to Baghdad. Locals remember their catastrophic rising of 1991; this time a full-scale rebellion might not happen until the Shia see two developments: full control of Basra by coalition forces and further destruction of the Republican Guard, which was responsible for crushing the rising 12 years ago. Blasting the myth of Saddam's "invincibility" requires that coalition forces neutralize the regime's instruments of coercion and quickly develop liberated zones to empower southern tribes and families, legitimize cooperation with the "liberators," and advertise the definitive end of Tikriti rule. [redacted]

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The Red Cell was asked to speculate on why the population of southern Iraq has not yet risen against Saddam Husayn and on what coalition actions might inspire the Shia to more robust action. [redacted]

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Why Risk Another Disaster? [redacted]

(b)(3)

Western reporters' interviews with locals provide anecdotal evidence that, despite coalition advances, an image of Saddam's personal power is a potent deterrent to rebellion. Many in the south acknowledge coalition military power but remain unconvinced that Saddam is really finished. For now, the perceived risk-reward ratio provides insufficient incentive to rise against the regime.

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- Our reading [redacted] suggests a population still cynical of US(b)(1) motives in the wake of the 1991 catastrophe and made even more wary by the initial(b)(3) bypass of southern cities—leaving the Shia exposed to the terror of Fedayeen thugs as coalition forces minimize their own casualties.

- The regime's survival in Baghdad and continued broadcast of messages nationwide despite coalition air power stokes the fear that Republican Guard tanks—which crushed Shia small arms in 1991—will return to settle scores with rebels. [redacted] (b)(3)

Indeed, the trauma of the 1991 suppression and the present Shia caution suggest that another great uprising may not be in the offing. This time, a more prudent southern populace might wait until they are physically liberated before they feel sufficiently safe to cooperate with their liberators. At that time they might savagely turn on Saddam's remaining killers and flunkies.

- Some who hate Saddam but lost family members in 1991 may remain overtly hostile towards the US even after liberation; their mood may be akin to that of Warsaw after the Polish resistance rising of 1944, when a powerful Soviet army just across the river stood by while the Germans destroyed the rebellion. This memory remained vibrant throughout the Communist period. [redacted] (b)(3)

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Prompting More Active Cooperation [REDACTED]

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We see daily signs that visible coalition success against the regime's bully battalions does facilitate local cooperation. Supportive remarks [REDACTED] are revealing—"three days ago I'd be to afraid to tell you what I'm telling you now"—and growing more common. We see four factors as critical in fostering an intellectual break with the regime and in determining whether the Shia will exorcise the ghosts of 1991 in a definitive move toward the coalition. [REDACTED]

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Physical Liberation. The liberation of cities and towns in the south—especially Basra—could create accelerating Shia support for coalition operations. We surmise many local notables would see the fall of Basra as compelling evidence that Saddam's forces are gone for good and that Iraqis can and should turn to the common task of constructing a better future.

- Demonstrated coalition willingness to risk casualties for the sake of cleaning out Saddam's thugs might be critical to how far the Shia in particular take risks. [REDACTED]

(b)(3)

Building Political Legitimacy. We surmise that, once coalition forces are clearly seen as intent upon eradicating the regime presence, some locals will cooperate—and even lead—the building of new authority. In an atmosphere where local Shia are seen as the successors to the Ba'thists, increasing numbers might be willing to direct coalition forces to Saddamites in hiding and, perhaps, to revolt in areas still controlled by the regime.

- The destruction of the regime's coercive means will involve revenge-taking against the murderers of 1991. Reports that locals are able to take revenge on Saddam's henchmen in the south might stir up rebellion elsewhere.
- Revenge-taking may provide needed catharsis but will require careful coalition management. Such oversight is more likely to work if local notables share responsibility with liberating officers—local courts might establish a version of the legal vetting process used in post-Communist Eastern Europe and could become a basis for local government. [REDACTED]

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Hammering the Snakehead. As the liberation of the south is completed, prospects for active southern cooperation would probably increase with coalition military success against Saddam's elite units around Baghdad. In particular, Iraqis need to see televised proof that the hated Republican Guards and other armed pillars of the regime are being destroyed. [REDACTED]

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Protecting the Holy Sites. The Shia holy sites at Najaf and Karbala will remain a neuralgic issue regardless of strategy employed in the South. We worry that Saddam will destroy the Tomb of Ali or other holy places and blame the US. Public statements of alarm at Saddam's plans should be repeated over and over, and willingness to consult local Shia leaders—and perhaps even Iran—over how to arrange the departure of Saddam's forces from the sites might improve the coalition position in this public relations battle.

- Inviting local leaders to discuss the holy sites and view US and UK troop activities—perhaps modeled on the Western reporters embedded in coalition military units—might improve the US image with the Shia population and give them a new and trusted source of information. [REDACTED]

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Special Memorandum

14 February 2003

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If Saddam Escapes His Box [redacted]

(b)(3)

To escape from his predicament short of war, Saddam must bring enough pressure to bear that the US will pull back. The Iraqi dictator, notwithstanding his public bravado, is an experienced tactician and probably realizes he cannot make a frontal attack but must operate indirectly, making concessions that divide the US from its allies and raise the political and diplomatic price of war for the US to an intolerable level. [redacted]

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CIA's Iraq analysts were asked to assess how Saddam might try to slip a US-made noose and the implications if he did so. [redacted]

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How Saddam Might Play His Hand [redacted]

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Only a move that virtually all US allies, including the UK, cited as evidence of good-faith disarmament by Iraq would isolate the US diplomatically.

- Other measures—such as stepping down in favor of Qusay or someone else, faking his own death or making a spurious claim to possess nuclear weapons—are non-starters.
- Saddam would gain little leverage with US allies by exiling himself. The Allied goal is disarmament, not regime change, and disarmament can be achieved with or without Saddam's presence.
- Moreover, Saddam does not need to persuade the US that he is disarming. He needs only to persuade our allies that this is so and let them do the diplomatic heavy lifting for him. [redacted]

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We assess Saddam has two main options for pressing the US. Neither would require him to sacrifice all his WMD immediately, but either eventually might force him to do so. While we believe Saddam is most likely to make only slow, begrudging concessions to the UN that will not divorce our allies from us, we cannot exclude the possibility he will act more decisively, even at the risk of losing his WMD.

- **Saddam could disclose some or all of his WMD holdings**, revealing weapons, explaining the illicit uses for dual-use facilities, and emptying WMD arsenals, while reaping the public relations bonanza of explaining to the world that the prospect of a frightful, useless war had given him a change of heart.
- **Saddam essentially could endorse the Franco-German plan to strengthen inspections**, promising to do his part to make the system more robust by offering unrestricted access to Iraqi airspace, ordering Iraqi scientists to give UNMOVIC interviews outside Iraq, and requesting permission to issue an amended WMD declaration, in which he would document the destruction of the chemical and biological agents unaccounted for from the 1990s. [redacted]

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The full or partial disclosure option is the riskier of the two for Saddam; he would sacrifice at least some of his WMD stocks, and this option is less likely to isolate the US diplomatically. It would provide the proverbial WMD "smoking gun," which could be used to argue no one could trust anything the regime pledged or did in the WMD area.

- Moreover, the argument that UNMOVIC could not verify whether Saddam had come clean or was making only a token disclosure would gain credence because Saddam's previous WMD declarations would be shown as lies.

[REDACTED]

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Saddam would stand a better chance of success by piggybacking on the Franco-German proposal. In addition, this option would be more attractive to him because he might not have to sacrifice his WMD.

- Saddam probably believes he can allow unimpeded UNMOVIC over-flights or interviews with Iraqi scientists abroad with little immediate risk to his WMD programs. The Iraqis could speed up their shell game to defeat over-flights, and information divulged by scientists would be cold by the time UNMOVIC acted on it.
- Issuing an amended WMD declaration under the pretense of having "discovered" documentation accounting for missing CBW stocks might go a long way toward meeting a key UNMOVIC demand.
- A well-orchestrated Iraqi campaign to welcome additional inspectors, and even accompanying UN military forces, would give Saddam a public relations coup. The actual threat posed by these changes to his WMD denial and deception program, initially at least, would be quite limited. [REDACTED]

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Saddam probably would not assume the enhanced inspection program would be as ineffective as the current version. His goal would be to delay the discovery of WMD by inspectors as long as possible while dividing the US from its allies enough to delay an invasion month by month until summer arrives.

- At that point, Saddam might calculate that extended delays would force the US to throw in the towel. He probably sees us as unwilling to fight in the Iraqi summer and as reluctant to keep a quarter-million men and their equipment on call in the Kuwaiti desert for six months on the off chance that diplomatic conditions improve by the fall.
- Even if the inspectors pried loose some crumbs of Iraqi WMD, Saddam could explain away the evidence ("rogue elements", or "misplaced ordnance") and expect the US, consumed with other foreign policy issues and entering a presidential election year, to lack the political will to reassemble the anti-Iraq coalition on the basis of what probably would be relatively meager UNMOVIC WMD finds. [REDACTED]

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If Saddam Pulled It Off [REDACTED]

(b)(3)

Forcing Washington to jettison its battle plans would be a remarkable achievement for Saddam, the capstone to an extraordinarily crafty and flexible political and diplomatic response to the challenges of the post-9/11 world. ***We believe he would tread carefully in the first year or so after the abortive showdown for fear of recreating the***

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coalition against him. Saddam would focus primarily on consolidating his diplomatic gains.

- He would continue to try to strengthen ties to neighboring states, posing as the Arab/Muslim hero who faced down the imperialist/Zionist beast. His prestige with Arab and Muslim publics as the Arab leader who humiliated America would make it difficult for even skeptical regional states to reject his charm offensive.
- He would maintain and perhaps augment his financial, moral, and material support for Palestinian terrorism because he probably would read the US retreat as a green light to meddle in the Arab-Israeli conflict, as long as he did not introduce WMD into the equation.
- Internally, Saddam would reign supreme. The security services would wrap up anyone suspected of having cooperated with us, and the opposition would feel doubly downtrodden and betrayed: promised liberation twice—in 1991 and 2003—and both times left to Saddam's tender mercies. [REDACTED]

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Nevertheless, Saddam probably would not let Iraq become a status quo power. His combative nature and desire that Iraq should lead the Arab world in a struggle against Western and Zionist influence argue against prolonged passivity. Moreover, Iraq's economy is likely to grow in this period, increasing Saddam's resources, as sanctions either are lifted because of seeming compliance with UNSCR 1441 or remain on the books but are ever more poorly enforced. Perhaps as soon as a year and a half to two years after facing down America, Saddam might begin to flex his muscles.

- Saddam's top priority would be regaining control of Kurdistan. He has never reconciled himself to losing a fifth of the land and population of Iraq.
- The incorporation could be peaceful and brokered through Kurdish leaders, who always have kept open contacts with Baghdad. They might conclude working with Saddam was better than futile resistance without US aid.
- Saddam might overrun the autonomous zone, perhaps under the pretext of countering the Ansar al-Islam.
- We also suspect Saddam's appetite for Kuwait would grow because of its collaboration with the US. Open Iraqi intervention—which, unlike an invasion of Kurdistan, Saddam could not justify as an internal matter—would be unlikely in the mid-term, but covert attempts to disrupt Kuwait's stability would be possible.
- In parallel with such maneuvers, Saddam would continue clandestine development of WMD programs, which could proceed rapidly if sanctions were lifted. Once he acquires nuclear capabilities, his reasons for restraint would vanish. [REDACTED]

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The implications of backing down from war for US global prestige and power projection are complex and difficult to analyze divorced from other world events. Nevertheless, some broad consequences would result under the most varied circumstances.

- America would face an uphill battle for years in gaining world support for non-UN-mandated use of force. Having seen America come so close to the brink and blink, potential US allies in any future confrontations with Saddam or anyone else would be more reluctant than ever, assuming that the US's talk of using force was bluster to force the UN or other multilateral bodies to act.

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- It would become harder for us to use the unilateral threat of force effectively, because potential adversaries, encouraged by Saddam's victory, would assume our threats were bluff. It might take several actual military interventions to re-establish the notion that the US military is more than an appendage to international multilateral diplomacy.
- Within the region, the US would lose virtually all credibility with Arab allies who, although fearing war's unintended consequences, privately have said they support quick, decisive action to remove Saddam.
- Washington would gain plaudits in some quarters for having shown "maturity" and allowed the UN to accomplish the job of allegedly disarming Iraq. These would be short-lived if and when it became clear that Saddam had merely pulled the wool over everyone's eyes. [REDACTED]

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Report

Number 103

15 February 2003

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments

Iraq: War Termination and Shaping The Peace

(b)(3)

Iraqi military units and whole districts may surrender quickly, forcing coalition commanders to manage a tricky transition from warfare to cease-fire to peace. Astute management of the period immediately after the white flags come out, when US and Allied commanders accept the surrender or defection of Iraqi forces and begin making arrangements for an occupation and transition to a post Saddam order, will set the terms and expectations for Iraqi behavior after the fighting stops and shape the atmosphere for postwar relations.

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History suggests that Great Powers are often unprepared for a rapid cessation of hostilities; many observers note that the sudden end of the 1991 Gulf War caused a cease fire to be negotiated "on the run" with gaps in the terms that Saddam was able to exploit.

- The Red Cell offers a speculative assessment on what issues the US and its partners might face in the period between surrender of Iraqi units and the end of the war, and how decisions made in this period will shape a broader peace.

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The "Who, What, When, and How" of Giving Up

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As individual Iraqi units give up, allowing defeated or defecting troops to retain some sense of dignity and pride may help prevent festering resentment, perhaps enlist rank and file acceptance of a new regime, and set the stage for a broader surrender that links Saddam and his cronies and not the Iraqi people to war and defeat.

(b)(3)

- Arabs place particular emphasis on dignity and honor, and repay humiliation with vengeance. Formal ceremonies that permit rank and file Iraqi troops to surrender or defect in good order may reinforce acceptance of defeat, reconcile the families of soldiers, and possibly assist rank and file recruitment to serve a new pro-US regime.
- Iraqi troops may prove reluctant to surrender to Kurds, Shi'a guerrillas and Iraqi exiles as being humiliating. Iraqi units would fear mistreatment at the hands of irregulars, and might resist until they could surrender to US or UK forces.

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One of the lessons of the aftermath of World War I is that a broader surrender should be imposed on the old regime that lost the war, not on a successor state. Even if the demise of Saddam's regime is chaotic, it will be important to round up surviving regime leaders to surrender individual units and districts, as well as for any formal ceremony accepting defeat.

- At the end of World War II, the Allies made a point of using surviving leaders of the Third Reich and the Japanese Imperial Government to sign the terms of surrender in formal, widely publicized ceremonies—McArthur's staging of the Japanese surrender on the deck of the USS Missouri set the tone for acceptance of the US occupation.

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- Symbolism and theatrics matter—surrender is a psychological as well as a political process, marking an acknowledgement of defeat and the end of resistance. If the old regime dodges formal responsibility for defeat, the "stab-in-the-back" myth, which dogged the Weimar Republic, could hobble successors to Saddam. [REDACTED]

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Thinking About Terms [REDACTED]

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Requiring a successor regime to implement terms perceived as punitive risks de-legitimizing it in the eyes of its own population and undermining creation of a favorable postwar political order. Tough terms demanded at the wrong time might also undercut the theme that the US and its Allies oppose Saddam and his henchmen, not the Iraqi people.

- Coalition commanders are likely to face urgent humanitarian problems; surrender terms that allow Iraqis to focus on those issues might set a positive tone for a later "final peace." Grant's famous offer to Lee to allow Confederate officers to retain their horses for spring plowing is a potentially effective model even now.
- The status of US and coalition forces also will need to be defined quickly and in ways that build support for post-Saddam political groups. Iraqis can be expected to jealously guard what remains of their sovereignty; agreement on clear rules on "Status of Forces" will help US authorities and Iraqi postwar administrators define expectations and avoid problems.
- SOFA agreements with West Germany may offer pertinent models, since they dealt with forces from several nations, enhanced support for pro-US parties as they moved from being imposed to being negotiated, but gave the US and Allies a right to intervene to preserve a democratic order. [REDACTED]

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How unit and regional military surrender terms might be linked to war crimes trials will be a delicate issue—some scholars suggest that mishandling by US authorities in Japan after World War II contributed to Japan's refusal to accept guilt for its wartime atrocities.

- Lessons from Nazi Germany suggest that surrender terms targeting proscribed organizations—such as the Iraqi Intelligence Service or Special Republican Guards—might reassure Iraqis who were not in the organizations that most directly buttressed Saddam's tyranny or ran his WMD programs.
- Even as key leaders of Saddam's regime are rounded up in the immediate aftermath of surrender of Iraqi forces, the 1945 and more recent Balkan experience suggests that US and Allied officials may want to "make haste slowly" in establishing tribunals to ensure that they enjoy broad legitimacy and that verdicts will be accepted by the Iraqi people. [REDACTED]

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From Cease-Fire to Armistice to Peace [REDACTED]

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Ending a war and building a peace can be thought of in stages: the first is ending local fighting, taking the surrender of defeated (or defecting) units and making immediate ad hoc arrangements for occupied areas; the second is imposing an armistice or general surrender that formally ends all fighting and sets surrender terms.

- These two early, transitional phases will shape the postwar environment before a successor Iraqi regime is fully in place and in a position to make formal agreements that help the US and its partners secure political results from military victory. [REDACTED]

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Imposing conditions seen as "political" on local surrender agreements could be a recipe for future trouble; terms dictated under such conditions may find little acceptance later. It is also prudent to assume that Iraqis of all stripes will use cease-fire or local surrender terms to enhance their post war political prospects.

- Providing guidance in advance regarding the political parameters for local agreements might avoid potentially embarrassing problems. General Eisenhower's 1942 deal to allow a senior Vichy French leader a position of power in North Africa in return for the surrender of local forces was an embarrassment to FDR and Churchill.
- In the case of Italy and Germany in World War II, Advisory Commissions made up of the major allies drafted in advance initial if notional armistice terms; in the event the situation on the ground determined most decisions. In the case of Japan, the US dominated the surrender process and consulted allies later.
- Including coalition partners in drafting and negotiating terms for a general armistice would probably help enlist international support and participation in Iraq's occupation and reconstruction, and give the armistice and subsequent coalition presence greater legitimacy. [redacted]

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History suggests that armistice terms will be critical to peace terms negotiated later with the successor Iraqi government, for formally ending a US and coalition occupation and establishing any US and international role in guaranteeing the peace and sustaining a post-Saddam order.

- As with an armistice agreement, international participation will be important especially in the case of Iraqi renunciation of WMD. Germany eschewed WMD in the context of a NATO guarantee; Japan did so in light of a bilateral security treaty with the US.
- In addition to permanently forswearing WMD, a peace agreement might be the appropriate instrument for Iraq's providing guarantees of civil liberties and good conduct towards neighbors.
- We caution that post World War I mandates and treaties designed to secure good treatment for minorities were soon defunct absent international enforcement. Versailles terms that linked Germany's enforced disarmament to later broader arms reductions gave Germans an excuse to ignore the terms, first clandestinely and then openly, when others did not agree to reduce their militaries. [redacted]

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Special Memorandum

22 January 2003

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments to the DCI Red Cell at [redacted]

Saddam's Eleventh Hour Options [redacted]

In the run up to a second Gulf war, there may be a gap between the time when key political elements for a US invasion fall into place and US forces begin operations. This time gap could open a window for Saddam to attempt last-minute political gambits, terrorist attacks, or threats against neighbors—anything to delay, deflect, or derail an attack. Once Saddam sees that the US offensive spells the end of his regime, he will have little reason for restraint.

The Red Cell offers a speculative analysis on how Saddam might try to prevent a US offensive or to so derail the coalition that the US is forced to halt its drive. [redacted]

Window for Creative Skulduggery [redacted]

As events play out during and after UNMOVIC's 27 January report to the Security Council, a window may open through which Saddam sees a US determined to move against him but a temporal gap emerging between the final political preparations and the final military deployments. During such a diplomatic/military gap, Saddam has a variety of options to try to throw the US off stride and to buy time.

- Saddam likes to be in control and distrusts others, so the most plausible options for him are those that do not require trust in surrogates or foreign governments. But when it comes to his survival, "anything goes." [redacted]

Saddam's Soft Options [redacted]

France's statement that it will oppose a new UNSC resolution endorsing military action has given Saddam reason to believe that he is successfully staving off war by "cooperating" just enough with the UN to keep diplomacy active. UNMOVIC may yet disrupt this strategy if its 27 January report exposes comprehensive Iraqi mendacity and a return to WMD hide and seek. If Blix takes an unexpectedly hard line, Saddam would face a dilemma—if he openly defies the UN, he hands the US a *casus belli*. But if he confesses his programs and turns over weapons, he admits deceit and thus might still provide a justification for US action.

- An extension of Iraq's current strategy would be for Saddam to suddenly "discover" some hidden WMD materials, execute a plausible culprit or two, and turn over token materials to UNMOVIC while continuing to hide the bulk of his programs and munitions. [redacted]

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- Another possible "extension" ploy would be to wait until the UNMOVIC report is presented later this month, track the ensuing UNSC debate, and then offer to respond positively to "all inspection concerns." Saddam might see this as gaining several more weeks or even months of delay. [REDACTED]

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Less likely, Saddam could still stage his own regime change. Saddam could, for example, step aside in favor of a council of handpicked officials that would send him into ostensible retirement or even exile. Arab leaders might privately tell him that his departure ensures his survival and that of large parts of his regime, and that even his eventual return is possible.

- The Saudis and Turks are both mounting an effort to persuade Saddam to step down and accept exile. Most Arab leaders would see this as less risky for them than a US invasion and occupation of Iraq.
- Key Arab states might tell Saddam that they would withdraw support for a US invasion if he agrees to step aside. Such a charade would not change the nature of the Iraqi state, but Arab governments might see Saddam's removal from Baghdad as enough of an "Arab solution" to obviate a US invasion.
- Saddam need do nothing but receive delegations and string out discussions. Mere hints that Saddam might do the "unthinkable" and step down could induce Arab and Turkish leaders to press the US for more time. [REDACTED]

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Hard Options for a Desperate Dictator [REDACTED]

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Once military action appears imminent or actually begins, Saddam might turn to more deadly gambits to deflect a US offensive. Helping to cause a crisis elsewhere, using hostages or human shields, threatening neighbors with WMD—even claiming to possess, and threatening to use, a nuclear weapon—could be seen as derailing US plans.

- With the Muslim *haj* scheduled for February 9-14, religious fervor in Saudi Arabia and the Muslim world may peak during Saddam's window for skullduggery. About 17,000 Iraqis will make the *haj* this year—enough to conceal hundreds of agents who could feed off widespread Muslim emotion to instigate massive anti-US protests. Saddam could reason that large, violent demonstrations would cause the Saudis and other Muslim regimes to rethink support for a US offensive.
- European and US peace activists may provide useful tools for Saddam, posturing on top of power plants, bridges, and air-raid bunkers. Saddam could supplement foreign activists by "encouraging" other vulnerable groups, such as Iraqi schoolchildren, to similarly sacrifice their blood for "the Arab cause." Knowing that releasing his human shields in 1990 did him no good, Saddam may this time keep them in place.
- Saddam could try to stir up a humanitarian panic by in effect holding hostage portions of his own population, warning that he will use all means to defend Iraq and that his Shi'a and Kurdish citizens will be expected to sacrifice themselves—the implication being he will unleash CW and BW on the Kurds and Shi'a if Iraq is invaded.
- Saddam might cooperate with terrorists in staging a WMD attack designed to refocus US attention on al-Qa'ida. Agents directly under Iraqi control or hired by Iraq, releasing anthrax or a contagious disease in many locations in the US or elsewhere might be seen as igniting such a crisis that the US would have to address it even at the cost of diverting resources from Iraq.

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- Saddam could try to coordinate with North Korea's leaders to keep the US torn between two crises. While North Korea needs no Iraqi urging to cause trouble and there is no evidence of cooperation, Saddam is in a position to promise Kim Chong-il substantial rewards in oil and cash for stirring the nuclear pot.
- Saddam could try to make a virtue of US claims and announce that Iraq in fact has a nuclear weapon, either obtained from P'yongyang—to lend an air of truth—or developed domestically. [redacted] (b)(1)
Regional leaders could cite the risk of a nuclear conflict as justification to balk at military action despite the fact that Saddam would be in major violation of UNSC resolutions. Some might even cite the North Korean case, and say that it was now time for the US to talk to Saddam. (b)(3)
- Saddam could escalate his threats to visit destruction on neighboring countries hosting US forces, hoping to fan domestic problems for Turkey and Saudi Arabia in particular. [redacted] (b)(1)
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And When All Else Has Failed [redacted] (b)(3)

Once Saddam sees an attack coming regardless of what he says or does, he may decide his best option is to strike first against Israel, the US or its allies. Such a move would invite the regime's destruction but Saddam might reason that he has nothing to lose.

- Saddam has a limited but real capability to attack targets in Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Israel with ballistic missiles and aircraft or UAVs loaded with CBW. Firing first would enable Saddam to maximize surprise and make the most effective use of his limited capabilities. A few lucky hits from chemical or biological warheads getting through anti-missile defenses could cause serious civilian and military losses, and in Saddam's calculus, derail the US offensive at an early stage.
- Saddam might try to increase the effectiveness of pre-emptive action by orchestrating it with other steps, such as terrorist strikes in the US or using "hired threats" from North Korea to beset the US with multiple distractions.
- Saddam could strike first at Israel, possibly even launching missiles purportedly coming from Syria, attempting to ignite an Arab-Israeli war. If Israel retaliates against both Iraq and Syria, Hizballah is likely to join in—to Saddam's delight. [redacted] (b)(3)

Saddam's options are not mutually exclusive, and he could sequence steps depending on circumstances—for example, first trying limited disclosures to UNMOVIC, while sabotaging the haj and draping peace activists on his command bunkers. If these ploys failed, he would still have the option to launch an attack on Israel and to ignite an Arab-Israeli war. With an American sword of Damocles hanging over his head, we should expect Saddam to grasp at any straw to avert his doom. [redacted] (b)(3)

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Director of Central Intelligence

DCI Red Cell

A Red Cell Report

Number 102

7 February 2003

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What Happens if Saddam "Goes Missing"? [redacted]

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Defying his "die in the bunker" image, Saddam could try to spoil a US victory by pulling an UBL-type disappearance to prearranged bolt holes and leading a WMD terror war from the shadows. Saddam's aims in such a war would include personal survival, revenge, raising the cost of a US occupation, and, by making Iraq ungovernable without him, eventually returning to power. Armed with biological and chemical weapons and dismissive of Iraqi casualties, Saddam and terrorist allies could lay waste to villages and harass coalition troops with far greater lethality than renegade Afghan warlords or Taliban. [redacted]

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The Red Cell was asked to consider the implications of a Saddam gone missing. [redacted]

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Could Saddam Reprise Usama? [redacted]

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Many observers anticipate that a Saddam flushed from Baghdad and fleeing for his life will meet his end like Mussolini, captured by fellow countrymen and left to swing by his heels from a lamppost—or worse. However, Saddam's instinct for self-preservation, decades in power, and early experience as an underground revolutionary suggest that he has planned escape routes and safe havens inside Iraq—and possibly in neighboring states—where he could go to ground. Coalition forces might be surprised by a host of factors that could help Saddam slip the noose.

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- Gaps in coalition understanding of tribal dynamics and loyalties might lead to mistakes that alienate tribal leaders and cause them to look the other way or clandestinely support Saddam or his cronies. Beneficiaries of Saddam's rule who fear they would suffer under US occupation would be especially prone to mischief.
- Bribes, inbred antipathy toward US occupiers, local politics and economics, and family and tribal ties could all prompt selected individuals to provide aid or safehaven to regime remnants. Greater fear of a Saddam-on-the-loose with WMD than of US occupiers might also figure in calculations.
- Although Iraqi terrain is not as conducive to prolonged hiding as are the mountains and caves of the Afghan/Pakistan border, there are pockets of favorable landscape and anonymous enclaves in the Sunni center of the country where Saddam could remain at large. Because coalition forces cannot cover every square inch of Iraq, success at capturing him would depend upon active cooperation from locals.
- Hoping to tie down the US and prevent action against them, elements in Iran and Syria might quietly offer a fugitive Saddam clandestine refuge, allowing his followers to nip across the border to inflict non-attributable pain on occupying forces. Although the political leadership in Damascus and Tehran might be cowed by an overwhelming US presence on their border, intelligence and security personnel already supporting terrorism—particularly in Iran—might relish the chance to hit US forces so conveniently close to home.

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- Saddam is known for his use of doubles and has access to plastic surgeons. He could alter his appearance and disappear for a considerable period, perhaps planning to reemerge later.

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Saddam On The Loose: Sendero Luminoso with WMD

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While a Saddam not in command of his military forces is a Saddam who has lost the war, a Saddam who escapes capture could still cause serious problems for the US and its allies. Relying on pre-established safe havens and support networks, weapons caches and secure communications, Saddam could launch a surprisingly resilient effort to crash the coalition victory party.

- Drawing upon lessons from the failure of al-Qa`ida and Taliban remnants and various Afghan warlords to make significant dents in coalition control of the Afghan battlescape, Saddam might squirrel away enough WMD to make hit and run attacks from his roving thugs significantly more painful than the improvised conventional strikes ongoing in Afghanistan.
- Saddam might apply tactics Sendero Luminoso used in Peru, brutally striking civilians in remote villages to showcase the inability of US forces to be everywhere at all times to protect the innocent. Because Saddam has utter contempt for Iraqi citizens and many bitterly despise the dictator, there would be no limit to his ruthlessness—calculated not to return Saddam to power right away, but to embarrass the US and raise the costs of occupation.
- The mobile BW labs and small caches of chemical weapons that confound arms inspectors could make it easier for Saddam to project lethal force even while on the run. His cronies could spread powdered anthrax or other WMD contaminants to deny coalition forces and their Iraqi allies access to certain spaces, such as government buildings, airports and oil facilities.
- If some SCUDs remained undiscovered—perhaps hidden in barns, warehouses, or wooded areas—Saddam might be able to arrange their launch even after the coalition achieved a general military victory.

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Terrorist Collusion for WMD Chaos

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If Saddam planned to abandon Baghdad and lead an underground terror war, he would have strong incentives to supply WMD materials to a variety of terrorist groups to conduct attacks outside Iraq—and make this known to attract extremist support for his cause. Saddam would hope a wave of terrorism abroad would impel the US to divert forces.

- With the general battle for Iraq lost and much of his WMD arsenal either spent, suppressed or subject to discovery by occupying troops, Saddam would have few incentives to refrain from distributing some of his remaining WMD materials to terrorist groups like al-Qa`ida and Palestinian extremists—or even to the Iranian Qods force or Syrian conspirators in exchange for safe passage.
- Encouraging al-Ansar and al-Qa`ida to unleash their WMD-armed fighters in northeastern Iraq could provoke fighting with and between Kurdish factions leading to intervention by Turkey, with the US forced to play peacemaker. The anti-Iranian MEK might also benefit from Saddam's WMD largesse to provoke destabilizing Iranian reactions.

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In addition to motives of revenge and spite against those who aided the US, Saddam might see trying to stay one jump ahead of US forces and unleashing WMD attacks as allowing him to cut a more romantic figure as a "rebel for Islam," and thus gain support from violent extremists that he could not command as a secular tyrant.

- Saddam, like the jihadists, would be out of power, on the run, and an underdog against an overwhelming enemy. His goals might begin to look more like those trumpeted by Islamic extremists—driving the Crusader infidels from Muslim lands.

[redacted] If
Saddam were to escape the US blitzkrieg and transform himself into a revolutionary folk hero, he could attract a steady stream of jihadist recruits for a long war. [redacted]

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Without Saddam's Body, A Propaganda War Against the US [redacted]

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As long as Saddam is thought to be on the loose, the hunt for the disappearing dictator risks overshadowing coalition accomplishments in Iraq, much as UBL's flight allows critics to question the success of the Afghan campaign. We would expect foreign detractors to personalize the failure to capture Saddam and UBL as a competition between the US President and his two nemeses, with scores kept unflatteringly as 0-2.

- Doubts about US ability to "finish the job" might accompany recriminations harkening back to the first Gulf war about whose fault it was that Saddam escaped this time. Terrorists would draw encouragement, perceiving that the US might be good at overthrowing regimes, but is bad at apprehending individuals.

- Iranian and Arab audiences disposed to conspiracy theories might even suspect a US "secret deal" to facilitate Saddam's disappearance. [redacted]

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More serious commentators would wonder about the uneasy effect a missing Saddam might have on efforts to rebuild Iraq. They would ponder what mischief Saddam might make, question where the loyalties of second-tier military and government men really lie, and assess Saddam's chances of a Phoenix-like rise from the ashes.

- Saddam has been in exile before, and his successful escape would raise fears that Iraq had not seen the last of him. Iraqis cowed by two decades of his brutal tyranny might need a long time to be certain he would not reappear, undermining coalition efforts to exert political control.
- As long as proof of Saddam's demise were lacking, surviving sons or lackeys could use uncertainly about his fate to raise questions about the legitimacy of a US-installed successor regime, perhaps drawing on bank accounts and other resources hidden abroad to fund opposition activities. [redacted]

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